**TIME ALONE WITH GOD**

Ingredients:

* Half an hour, every day.
* Quiet, so you focus on yourself and on God;
* Prayer, worship, thanksgiving, as your response to God
* Word, so you can ponder His truth
* Life, people and events, so you are aware of Him in these situations

Method:

* Time – a fixed time when you are unlikely to be interrupted is best but more important is to actually start having such a time with God.
* Quiet – A simple method is to be quiet until you are aware you are in God’s presence before you start to respond to Him.
* Word – Read and be familiar with what is said. Meditate on the Word: “What does it say?” “What does it mean?” “How should I respond?” You may use the questions to help you or set them aside.
* Life – Use the time to also be aware of the things that are happening, inside you and around you. Bring these before God and speak to Him.

# Monday and Tuesday

[**HEBREWS 10:19-25**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%2010&version=NIV)

Remember this is your time alone with God. It is a time to tell God what is on your mind (thinking back over the past day), listen to him speak to you (reading and meditating on a bible passage), and finally, to respond to him (prayer). The questions are there to help you do this. Ignore them if they do not help. If your time is limited, I suggest that you don’t do everything in one go but spread them over the two days.

1. Take time to be quiet so you can focus on your time alone with God. Recall and briefly write down any significant things that happened or occupied you the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [HEBREWS 10:19-25](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%2010&version=NIV). Write down what you think the passage is about and what it says to you. Feel free to use the questions in “Further Thoughts” to help you think over the text.
3. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.

**Further Thoughts**

1. *“Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God …”* The writer of Hebrews spent many chapters to outline how Jesus had opened the way for us to enter into God’s presence by dealing with our sin on the cross and now calls on us to take advantage of it. What does it mean to “enter the Most Holy Place”? What is the basis of our confidence that we may now do so?
2. From the fact that we now can enter the Most Holy Place, the writer draws out 3 responses: “ … *let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.”* What is our assurance as we draw near to God? What is the point of drawing near to God? Do you regularly draw near to God? What do you do when you are in his presence?
3. *“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.”* What is this “hope” that we are to hold unswervingly to? Would you say that one expression of holding fast to our hope is to regularly and frequently fellowship with God (draw near to him) or is this only about making sure we don’t renounce our faith? Why is the faithfulness of God the reason why we should hold fast to our hope?
4. *“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”* The writer not only calls us to fellowship with God but also to fellowship with one another. How are the two connected? Is it alright to be a “loner Christian”? Do you think that Christian fellowship must be about bible discussions and sharing about God or that it should be about life activities (eat, chat, play, fun, etc.)? What do you think good Christian fellowship is like? What is to be the fruit of good fellowship in Christian circles?
5. Do you think good Christian fellowship develops well among people who are having good fellowship with God, or it doesn’t matter?

# Wednesday and Thursday

[**HEBREWS 10:26-31**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%2010&version=NIV)

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1. Take time to be quiet so you can focus on your time alone with God. Recall and briefly write down any significant things that happened or occupied you the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [HEBREWS 10:26-31](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%2010&version=NIV). Write down what you think the passage is about and what it says to you. Feel free to use the questions in “Further Thoughts” to help you think over the text.
3. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.

**Further Thoughts**

1. *“If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.”* The contrast to responding positively to the work of Christ that we considered in the previous passage is to completely disregard it. What happens when we spurn God’s efforts to put us right with him?
2. Do you think this is about people who are Christians but never drawing near to God (the first “let us”); people who are Christians but give up (the second “let us”); people who are Christians but never bother to fellowship with other Christians; or people who were never Christians?
3. *“Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?”* Why does the writer say that there is no more hope for them and they can only expect judgement?
4. *“For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”* Do you think God can be so fearsome? Do you think it is acceptable that he will condemn those who do not take the way that Jesus had opened to enter into his presence and consign them to hell?
5. From all that is said above, how would you then regard the 3 “let us” that the writer commends to us? Are they essential for us as Christians to follow, or they don’t really matter as we have already been promised salvation?

# Friday and Saturday

[**HEBREWS 10:32-39**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%2010&version=NIV)

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1. Take time to be quiet so you can focus on your time alone with God. Recall and briefly write down any significant things that happened or occupied you the past day. Share with God what you thought or felt. Pray also for those he has laid on your heart.
2. Read [HEBREWS 10:32-39](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%2010&version=NIV). Write down what you think the passage is about and what it says to you. Feel free to use the questions in “Further Thoughts” to help you think over the text.
3. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.

**Further Thoughts**

1. *“Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.”* The writer encouraged the Christians to remember the time when they were willing to pay the price to embrace the Gospel. They understood and accepted what it means to walk on the path that Jesus had forged, to enter into God’s presence. What does the Gospel mean to you? Is it, as Jesus taught, treasure that you are willing to sell everything for, or you are willing to embrace the faith as long as it is convenient and does not ask too much of you?
2. *“So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For, ‘In just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay.’ And, ‘But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back.’”* Do you think it is possible for us to throw away our faith, or that God will never allow us to slide that far (see v26-27 as well)?
3. *“But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.”* Does this mean that the Holy Spirit will enable us to be strong when we need to, or that if we throw away our faith we no longer belong? Why is it that after such severe warnings the writer tells his readers that they are not those who shrink back but those who have faith?
4. From the whole passage that we have been considering this week, from v19, what does the writer allow you to be confident about, what does he warn you not to take for granted, and what does he encourage you to do about the confidence and the warning?

# Sunday

**CONFIDENT, BUT NOT TOO CONFIDENT**

*“Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.”*

Having spent much of his sermon—Hebrews feels more like a sermon than a letter or book—establishing how Jesus was the superior sacrifice that is able to fulfil what the Law and the Sacrifices, established in the Old Testament, were not able to because they were intended to foreshadow the blood of Christ as the perfect sacrifice, and how Jesus was the perfect High Priest, the writer concludes that we can have full confidence in the way of Jesus to enter into the presence of God.

That confidence rests solely on the perfection of Christ and not in any way on ourselves and therefore we are encouraged to “draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings.” There is nothing more for us to do except to draw near to God sincerely and in faith.

The writer also encourages us to “hold unswervingly to the hope we profess” because God is faithful. And finally he calls us to “consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together” because the Day draws near.

Draw near to God, trust him to deliver his promises, and encourage each other to love and good works: Having done everything so we can come to God, it is now up to us to take advantage of it. As the saying goes, we can be brought to the water but we have to drink it ourselves and we keep on drinking.

Why is this important? Because judgement is a fearful reality. All the theological debate regarding the “once saved always saved” position is deceiving and dangerous because it misrepresents what our salvation is all about. We like to pretend that salvation is a transaction at a single point in time because it is convenient and simplifies the Gospel while the truth is that it is a relationship that is enabled by the sacrifice of Jesus.

“Draw near to God, trust him to deliver his promises, and encourage each other to love and good works” tells us succinctly how we should respond to the work of Christ in order to benefit from it. Do so and experience the faithfulness of God to ensure that you will reach the promised destiny. He does not say, “raise your hand”, “sign on the dotted line”, or “say the sinner’s prayer” and your destiny will be guaranteed.

Spurn that relationship and you slap away the hand of God stretched out to help you. Is that the end for you? Probably not because God has reached out to us while we were yet sinners and surely will continue to do so. But The writer of Hebrews does not allow us to be comfortable in such a position and rightly so.

*“If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.”*

1. Review the answers/thoughts you wrote down in the past week. Read the short sharing above. Does it add anything to your own thoughts?
2. What is God saying to you? Write down a prayer in response.